Dilemmas in teaching happiness

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Abstract

There is a burgeoning amount of research into happiness and greatly increased popular attention, so it seems logical to add a course on happiness to the university curriculum. We encountered, in developing and running such a course, a number of dilemmas that the topic of happiness makes especially acute. Should the teacher remain separate from the class, as an authority, or participate in group activities? Is the primary goal of the class to learn content or to change the relationship of students to the world? What does a mark for learning content signify if developing happiness habits is a goal? Should one goal of the class be for the teacher to be happy and, if so, does this conflict with student learning? These dilemmas reflect larger questions about the purpose of university education. This paper reflects on those questions through our experience of formulating and delivering a new university class on happiness.

Introduction

In several academic fields there is much more emphasis on problems than on the positive side of life. In psychology, for example, most attention has been on negative psychological states like depression, with little on positive states like optimism. In economics, the overwhelming emphasis is on competitive systems with very little attention to altruism and gift economies. In sociology, a traditional research area is social problems, from unemployment to drug addiction.

This long-standing orientation to the negative sides of life has been challenged in recent years by the positive psychology movement. Martin Seligman, the leading figure in this movement and author of *Learned Optimism* (Seligman, 1990) and *Authentic Happiness* (Seligman, 2002), sees attention to positive emotions as a necessary complement to the conventional orientation of the field: as well trying to bring people out of negative states up to normality, there should also be efforts to help people to become happier. Seligman's work has received a lot of attention, but it is just the tip of a huge growth in happiness research.

For some scholars, topics like happiness are soft or fluffy, not worthy of serious study. Optimism researcher Suzanne Segerstrom comments that

> the study of 'positive' topics, like optimism or happiness, attracts a lot of skepticism from people who study 'negative' topics. The stereotype of people who study positive topics is that they are not serious scientists. (Segerstrom 2006: 195–196)

Although many great philosophers and religious figures over the centuries have commented on happiness and the quest for it, it is only with the positive psychology movement, which has generated a large and growing body of published research, that the study of happiness has gained more scholarly credibility — and a huge public profile (Ruark, 2009).

This increased profile also means happiness has become a subject worthy of offering to university students. Each of us had been reading the happiness literature for some years (e.g., Argyle, 1987; Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Frey and Stutzer, 2002; Keyes and Haidt, 2003) and we thought teaching happiness would be a valuable experience both for students and ourselves.

We agreed that our goal in the class was not just to help students to learn *about* happiness but also to develop understandings and skills that would enable them to *become* happier during the semester or, more probably, over the long term. This was a different sort of goal than much university teaching, which is designed to impart content or skills but not directly to encourage students to change the way they relate to the world on an emotional level. In only a few areas, such as women's studies and peace studies, is personal transformation a key consideration in teaching.

To teach happiness thus raises the question of the purpose of the university or, in other words, the question 'what is education for?' Dilemmas in teaching happiness arise from the tension between the

usual practices in university education, built around aiming to impart knowledge and skills, and a different purpose in the study of happiness, learning how to be happy.

In the following section, we describe our approach to teaching happiness, outlining what the subject involved and the rationale for our approach. Then we examine four dilemmas, which can be raised in the form of questions. Should the teacher be a class participant? How can goals of learning content and changing one's self be balanced? How should learning about happiness be assessed? Is the teacher's happiness a goal? In the conclusion, we sum up the implications of these dilemmas for teaching happiness and for education more generally.

The happiness class

We intended our happiness class to be a transformative experience for students — if they wanted to take up the opportunity — while conforming to the curriculum and procedural requirements of the university. We did not encounter any difficulty in the new-subject-approval process: most of our colleagues thought it sounded like a great idea. Our only minor compromise was in the name of the subject: we originally proposed 'How to be happy', in accord with our transformative purpose, but were advised to change this to something more conventional, so we ended up with 'Happiness: investigating its causes and conditions.'

Our aim was an interdisciplinary subject that would appeal to students from across the university and draw on the disciplines of psychology, economics, politics and sociology, among others. However, at the University of Wollongong there is no special home for such interdisciplinary subjects — such as 'general studies' at some universities — so we decided it was easier to list the subject in our own field, Media and Cultural Studies. We were fortunate that our colleagues were open to a subject that was more wide-ranging than usual in the field.

To give maximum flexibility within each class period, we chose to run three-hour classes once per week. We decided not to give any lectures, because lectures would suggest an emphasis on content and position us as authorities. Instead we wanted to develop an emphasis on student-centred active learning. We think that encouraging student engagement is a productive approach whatever the subject matter, but particularly in relation to happiness. The skills and attitudes that promote happiness need to be experienced and understood on a personal level. They can't simply be memorised as content.

There turned out to be two classes of 21 students each, with very similar demographics, with only one student over the age of 25; each of us took one class. We consulted each other about how we ran the classes, but other than this they were self-contained.

The activities in class time were largely determined by assessment tasks. The common thread in the tasks was that students were to study research on happiness and other themes and relate it to observations they made themselves. Their observations could be about other people's behaviour or

self-expressed feeling of happiness, or of their own experiences and feelings. We wanted to encourage them to think about what was occurring around them and in their own lives and relate it to relevant research.

Our textbook was Martin Seligman's *Authentic Happiness.* We assigned a reading from the book for most weeks of the semester and asked each student to give a short oral report — up to one minute long — to the class on the reading, relating it to observations they made themselves. We recorded whether each student gave a report but didn't judge its quality. Because each student had to perform each week, and because there was a small assessment weighting to giving the report, nearly all students did the weekly readings. The sequence of short reports threw up a range of reactions to each reading and was fascinating for everyone involved.

The remaining assessment tasks involved relating happiness to a theme area, such as advertising, fashion, love, music or work. We listed about 25 possible themes and invited students to select others if they wanted.

The second assessment task was giving an individual oral report of up to 12 minutes. We asked students to explicitly discuss three references from happiness research and from a theme area of their choice and to relate this information to observations they made themselves, for example interviews with friends. We gave sample oral reports ourselves early in the semester to model what we were expecting.

The third task was to work in a team to run an extended activity in class — typically about an hour long — to help other students learn about happiness and a theme area. Again, we ran sample activities. Many of the student-team classroom activities were better than ours!

The final task was called a 'happiness consultancy'. Working in teams, students approached a group of people — most commonly a group of workers — and used interviews and observations to find out about happiness in the group. (We obtained formal ethics approval for the student research.) Each team then prepared a consultancy report suggesting ways for the group to become happier, and supplemented this with individual written reflections on the process of doing the consultancy. In the second half of the semester, we spent time in most classes working with the student teams to help them select a suitable group for their consultancies and pursue their investigations.

Through these tasks, much of the class time was taken up with activities either delivered by or run by students. The one-minute reports involved students reporting their responses to Seligman to each other; the oral reports involved students telling each other about happiness research and their observations; the classroom activities were run by student teams for the other students; and in preparing for the consultancies, students learned by hearing what other teams were planning.

Students had varied reactions to the material. Seligman's book evoked a range of responses, some of them critical; it was apparent that reading about happiness research made them reflect on their own lives. The individual oral reports were valuable in raising a wide variety of perspectives. A few students

made observations about their own lives or the lives of people close to them that reflected both insight and thoughtfulness. Most of the teams running classroom activities seemed to have a lot of fun coming up with innovative ways of addressing issues.

The consultancy was more challenging. We learned that in future we will need to give more precise information and guidance about what we expected. Nonetheless, once the teams got going, they did well, some of them becoming quite enthusiastic about the task.

We told our classes that our academic purpose was learning *about* happiness but that if students learned how to be happier themselves, that was an extra benefit. Probably our comments about this were less influential than the content: reading Seligman's book, preparing and giving talks, hearing others' talks and so forth. This focus on happiness and its causes got many if not all students thinking about what happiness meant for them. Some of them became highly enthusiastic about the class, telling their friends about it and encouraging them to take it the following year. We attributed this excitement to the topic — happiness — as well as to the active orientation of the class, though these techniques were not dramatically different from what each of us had individually done previously.

Nevertheless, the subject matter did raise a series of quite specific educational issues and dilemmas that we now discuss. These dilemmas, while they may occur in other teaching situations, are accentuated when 'teaching happiness'. The very nature of the subject matter implies and demands altered relationships and expectations. Teaching happiness has implications for the 'how to' of education.

Teacher participation

Our class on happiness was based on a student-centred 'active learning' approach founded on the 'show not tell' principle. It involved a significant proportion of student-led activities. Under these circumstances we were led to ask: are we passive stand-apart teachers or engaged participants?

Physically the university lecture separates the teacher from the student and involves a one-directional 'talking at'. Epistemologically, the lecturer knows best, possessing knowledge that must be transmitted to students. Although this remains the modus operandi for some teacher-led tutorials, many university educators now recognise the benefits of active student engagement. Nonetheless, it is normally the teacher who organises and structures the activities and who observes the process from behind a desk.

In most classes, the teacher still has a role that is clearly separate from the roles of students. Teachers but not students give lectures and mark assignments. Even when the boundary is blurred, there is usually an asymmetry. For example, when students are involved in peer assessment, the teacher still coordinates the process. In Australian universities, teachers have ultimate responsibility for awarding marks, so it is difficult to transform a classroom into a fully democratised learning environment.

When the students organise the activities, as they often did in our happiness class, should the teacher join in? Who is the teacher now anyway? If the staff member does not join in the activity then we uphold a hierarchy that is inimical to the notions of equality and social interaction that the research on happiness promotes. If we stand apart from student-led activity we are implying that we have nothing to learn from them. Not only is this surely false, but also we devalue the students' work. On the other hand, if we join in the activities we may be asked to offer forms of personal disclosure that we may not be comfortable with. We may be put into physical relationships with students that raise ethical and emotional concerns. And on a simple pragmatic level our attention may be split between participating in an activity and assessing it.

We have enabled students run classroom activities in previous subjects. Some student teams invited us to be a participant in the activities and we sometimes choose to do so. It is often enjoyable, though it can make it difficult for us to roam the room and be impartial observers and assessors of the activity. So sometimes we decline. It may depend on the nature of the activity.

Some examples may help to clarify the issues.

One of the qualities that happiness research suggests promotes well-being is gratitude. Evidence suggests that people who keep weekly gratitude journals feel better about their lives and are more optimistic. They are also more likely to make progress towards important personal goals and to report helping another person (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Children who practise grateful thinking have more positive attitudes toward school and their families (Froh, Sefick, & Emmons, 2008). Research also suggests that grateful people report higher levels of positive emotions, life satisfaction, vitality, optimism and lower levels of depression and stress. They have a greater capacity to be empathic and to take the perspective of others (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002).

We set up a simple *gratitude activity* in our happiness class in which we:

- Introduced research about gratitude
- Asked students to list 5 things for which they are grateful and rank them 1-5 in order of importance
- Allocated students into small groups and asked students to compare their lists and to generate an agreed list of things for which we can be grateful.
- Asked students to devise strategies to develop gratitude in their lives
- Asked students to write a poem that they can stick on their wall to remind them to be grateful.

When we name and discuss the things for which we are grateful in a meaningful way that moves beyond banal generalities to specifics of our lives, we will likely reveal not only details but vulnerabilities. If we as teachers participate in the activity with students we will disclose facets of our 'private' selves that students might not normally be privy to. Do we want students to know about the illness from which we recovered; the children we have loved; the relationship that we regenerated; the friends we depend on?

However, the pedagogic advantages of teachers participating in this activity are significant. We can show that we are human, indeed all too human, that we do not know it all, that we can practise what we preach and, above all, that we trust the class and they can trust us. This gratitude activity took place early in the history of the class so that by participating in it we were able to set the tone of open communication for the rest of the semester.

Before we undertake such activities, it is necessary to introduce the idea of confidentiality and the boundaries of disclosure. We need to establish that what is said in class should remain in class, and that each of us knows what we are and are not prepared to talk about.

One activity run by a student team aimed to illustrate and discuss the links between happiness and social interaction, including the importance of trust in relationships. As a warm-up activity, the class members were asked to hold hands in a way that created a human knot. The game was to untangle the knot without disengaging the hands. The activity involved a good deal of body contact. It was fun; the students loved it. We however chose not to participate in it because of the level of close physical contact between ourselves — middle aged men — and a class of mainly twenty-something women, though this resulted in a strange sense of exclusion and loss by choosing to be separate from the activity.

In the one-minute reports, each student was expected to make a comment, and many students reflected on their own reactions. Should we as teachers remain separate from this process, keeping our own emotions more private? If we conceive of the class as a collective journey towards personal insight and mutual learning, then we should join in the one-minute reports, indeed we should model the sort of observations and self-revelations that we are encouraging our students to demonstrate. On the other hand, we still took on the task of recording whether students had given their one-minute reports, and timekeeping to gently truncate over-long reports. While maintaining these teacher functions, we cannot be equal members of the task.

Some activities allowed us to participate more easily. Early in the semester we used many introduction exercises through which everyone in the classes got to know each other. Towards the end of the semester, we each ran an appreciation exercise. Sitting in a circle, we started with one student: everyone else wrote down what they appreciated about that student and then put their comments, unsigned, in a pile in front of the student. Then we went through the same process for the next student and so on around the circle. Then everyone picked up their slips of paper and read them.

This exercise is extremely powerful. It involves both giving and receiving appreciation, both known to build positive emotions.

We decided to be participants. We wrote appreciative comments about each student and took our turn in receiving them. (And how nice it was!) This broke down the usual teacher-student boundary and was more in tune with our desire to make the class into a mutual journey.

On the whole, participation by teachers in class activities is a necessary and valuable facet of the happiness class that generated trust, demonstrated authenticity and broke down barriers between teacher and students. Teaching happiness necessarily alters the student-teacher relationship. Nonetheless, there are institutional and cultural barriers to teacher participation that may need to continue while universities remain as they are. In teaching happiness it is for us all to work out the appropriate lines of demarcation.

Formal goals versus personal change

A class about happiness raises a fundamental question: what is education for? In particular, is the purpose of a happiness class the gaining of formal knowledge, by which we mean 'traditional content' such as research findings and an understanding of the key debates in the field? Or is it the achievement of insights and skills through which students can transform themselves and the world around them? In short, is the purpose of the class to learn about happiness or to become happier?

The learning outcomes attached to the subject outline were as follows:

1. Think critically about happiness and its connections with personal, social, political and economic issues (independent learners).

2. Develop understanding of a range of views about happiness and their relation to theories (informed).

3. Learn ways to reflect on and think creatively about happiness and related concepts (independent learners; problem solvers).

4. Develop research skills, including surveying and interviewing (effective communicators; problem solvers).

5. Develop and improve oral presentation and writing skills (effective communicators; responsible).

In so far as these objectives reflect the purpose of the happiness subject they tend towards the formal learning requirements of a university education. The emphasis is on 'thinking critically', 'reflect on', 'develop research skills' and 'writing skills'. Since the subject was a unit of a university degree it is appropriate that we should develop and assess academic knowledge and skills. Nonetheless, as teachers we hoped that we would be assisting students to bring about positive personal change, and from our conversations with students we knew that many of them hoped for this as well. Indeed, we think that achieving personal goals was the more important purpose of the subject, which university procedures required us to 'shroud' within formal requirements.

There are some questions that arise from such informal goals. First, are the formal and informal goals in conflict? Second, can the informal purposes be delivered, and do we offer false hope if we suggest that they can? Third, are such purposes measurable and demonstrable in any way?

The formal goals of a university education and the pursuit of personal happiness are not necessarily in conflict, but there are tensions. In particular, individuals can learn happiness research in great depth yet not be happy.

Seligman's (2002) most reliable conclusions are that the richer one's social world and the greater one's optimism, the happier one is. Personal happiness is built through connections to other people rather than through individual achievement. It depends more on our patterns of thinking than upon actual events. He suggests that to promote greater happiness we should foster forgiveness and gratitude about the past, savour the present moment, and look to the future with hope and optimism. Thus Seligman's prescriptions entail deliberately cultivating particular ways of thinking.

In the longer term Seligman proposes that our deepest emotional satisfactions come through the exercise of strengths and virtues (gratifications). Further, happiness involves the pursuit of 'right action' or virtue. Happiness depends not just on the 'good life' but also on *the meaningful life,* which involves 'using your signature strengths and virtues in the service of something much larger than you are' (Seligman, 2002: 263). Happiness has an ethical dimension.

Personal change requires that we build up personal maps of meaning that make sense of life and guide us through it. Thinking is at the core of our emotions; it is not events that make us happy or miserable but our interpretation of them. Since it is our stories that make us happy or lead us to despair so it is our stories that we need to change (Viney, 1996).

Prochaska, Norcross and DeClementi (1994) have identified a series of steps included in stories of personal change. The quest for change begins by thinking about our need for it (*contemplation stage*). After a while we develop more determination and develop a strategy to do so (*decision stage*) followed by a plan of action (*action stage*). A change process then needs to be continuously supported (*maintenance stage*).

Thus, happiness depends on specific outlooks, skills and actions, which are not in themselves academic ones. Further, while attitudes like optimism or skills like 're-framing' (seeing our problems in a new way) can be taught, it is unclear that this is appropriate for an academic subject in a faculty of humanities and social sciences in a traditional university. The goals of formal academic study are often competitive and individualist, whereas happiness depends on cooperation. Reading and research do not necessarily change personal constructs. Teachers in the social sciences may not have the skills to develop psychological attributes. And the time given to formal goals will militate against teaching informal goals.

Thus, teaching happiness as a university subject involves either a radical overhaul of the goals of education, or, more pragmatically in the current climate, living with contradictions. That there are limitations to the achievement of personal change goals in an academic subject does not mean that we cannot move in that direction. Our subject was designed in such a way as to allow for both kinds of purpose. For example, one of the key assessment tasks involved students developing and running a

class activity. They had to work together as a group to construct the activity and they had to gain the cooperation of others in the class to run it. In other words, they developed and enacted the kinds of social skills that are central to the development of happiness. Further, as teachers we designed activities involving both academic knowledge and skills alongside personal goals. For example, the gratitude activity outlined above involved students familiarising themselves with research about gratitude and setting out aspects of a personal strategy to increase their own levels of gratitude.

While we hope that students gain benefit from the subject beyond the assessable tasks, it could be said that engagement with emotionally sensitive material might give rise to or exacerbate emotional difficulties of which we are unaware or unable to deal with in a professionally appropriate fashion. This is possible, but we don't think that material about happiness is likely to give rise to such difficulties any more than say the study of the First World War in history or Macbeth in literature. If we were addressing anxiety or depression that would be a different matter.

Marking happiness

Marking student assignments brought the tensions between formal educational goals and personal happiness goals into stark relief. One might say that if happiness is the goal, then conventional formal academic assessments are not appropriate because they do not measure happiness. Equally, if becoming happier is the goal, then how can we possibly measure or assess it?

Actually, there are measures of happiness used by happiness researchers that we could have administered before and after the course, but they would not be acceptable as ways of measuring academic achievement. And this was an academic subject with academic assessment criteria. For example, the students had to give an oral presentation in which they were asked to:

> discuss at least three research sources, typically books or articles. One or two of these should be about research on happiness. One or two should be about one of the themes. Tell about the research and, if relevant, about the authors and their perspectives. Say how the research relates to your observations.

The final student 'consultancy report' included following assessment criteria:

> • Understanding of research on happiness and the chosen theme area
>
> • Understanding of the group and the causes and conditions of happiness in it
>
> • Use of sources (about happiness, theme area and the group) — including interviews and observations
>
> • Expression and appearance

Making such judgements is our stock in trade. They are never unproblematic, but they are within our normal range of activities. They require us to judge and classify students against benchmarks that we say they have met or failed to meet, and/or distribute students along a normative scale.

However, if one of the goals is becoming happier or at least acquiring attitudes and skills that promote happiness, then giving students a mark for learning content or displaying academic skills does not seem entirely appropriate. We could conceive of a student becoming happier but doing poorly by conventional academic standards, and vice versa. Worse still, we might make a student less happy by giving them a low grade. Peer assessment does not solve the dilemma because it is the making of judgements as such, rather than the person making them, that is at issue here.

In the end we did not find any simple way of resolving these assessment dilemmas. We carried out formal assessments because we were operating in a institutional context that required it. We encouraged students to apply the lessons of happiness research to their lives because we thought that was the most valuable aspect of the process. We learned to live with the contradictions. We did this by discussing the issues with students and accepting that different kinds of action and judgements are appropriate to different domains of life.

To put this in the discourse of contemporary cultural studies: we all perform shifting, fragmented and multiple identities. We are composed of not one but several, sometimes contradictory, identities in which different rules are pertinent in divergent domains. In that context we have become skilled at shifting from one rule-bound domain to another (Barker, 2008; Hall, 1992) and know how to hold competing goals.

It could be argued that a university subject should only be concerned with assessable, that is, measurable, learning outcomes and that if this were so then some of the dilemmas we discuss here would vanish. In that case, we could be concerned only to assist students to discover and understand ideas and concepts generated within happiness research. We could then measure students' capabilities with appropriate and specific learning outcomes.

Indeed we have not aimed to assess student learning outside of the information gathering, presentation and evaluation tasks that we set. Nonetheless we have been concerned to provide opportunities for students to gain understandings and skills that are not easily assessable. We think a university education should involve the possibility of intellectual and personal development that is not measurable by behavioural learning outcomes.

Most notably we are interested in offering students the possibility of being happier and not simply knowing about happiness; and it is from this concern that some of our dilemmas flow. We think this is a legitimate goal that should not be lost by concentrating only on measurable learning outcomes, which is not to say that one can't have both.

Teacher happiness

Thus far we have discussed the dilemmas of our happiness subject as they relate to students. We might also ask whether the goal of happiness extends to the teacher and, if so, does this goal conflict with student learning or happiness?

One of the findings of happiness research is that personal happiness does not contradict altruism. On the contrary, happy people are more able to give to others (Seligman 2002; Post, 2005). It follows then that happy teachers will be more able to give to students and teach them well. Further, it is surely ethically untenable to accept a situation in which teachers become unhappy by teaching others to be happy. Thus, on both counts we argue that teacher happiness ought in principle to be a goal of the subject.

There would seem to be no problem with having teacher happiness as a goal provided that it does not come at the expense of student happiness, or the reverse, namely that student happiness causes teacher unhappiness.

The most likely way that the happiness objectives of students and teachers could clash would be if they had disparate goals, for example if teachers held only academic goals while students held only behavioural or mood-oriented goals (as discussed above), or if teachers held participatory objectives for students who themselves wanted only passive content-transmission teaching modes.

Mutual happiness then depends upon mutual understanding of objectives, which in turn requires us to discuss and negotiate the terms of trade at the outset. We were occasionally irritated by students who did not fully participate and who failed to meet deadlines for in-class tasks and so forth. No doubt some students were not fully satisfied with our 'delivery' of the subject (maybe it lacked content or was not enough fun). However, for the most part we all seemed to be as happy as a classroom can enable us to be. As teachers we can report that we had some fun. We enjoyed this class more than most, and we learned a lot.

Concluding comments

Educators often subscribe to the ideal of fostering the autonomous learner, namely helping students commit to lifelong learning independently of courses and assessment. The reality, in many cases, is a focus on imparting knowledge and skills, encouraging students to be oriented to grades and degrees rather than ongoing learning. How can students become autonomous learners if teachers simply maintain conventional teacher roles, focus on content, give marks and see teaching as a mundane task rather than a joyful experience?

Teaching happiness highlights the ongoing tension between the stated ideal of student learning for life and the daily practice in university education of recycling content: achieving happiness is quite obviously a desirable personal goal as well as something to learn *about.* We have used our

experience in teaching a happiness class to explore and highlight dilemmas present in many university courses.

Remaining in the role of a teacher is the easy and obvious approach for university educators. However, it conflicts with the goal of transforming learning into a common quest in which mutual support and personal growth, rather than simply accepting authority, is the model of learning we wish students to acquire for the rest of their lives. Ideally, we as teachers should display a love of learning in a sharing environment that will serve as a model of relationships through which students may pursue happiness — and learning — for the rest of their lives. However, we have argued that the formal requirements of the university limit how much teachers can move outside traditional roles.

There is an enormous amount of research on happiness, much of it worth studying. But how should learning content — knowledge about happiness — be balanced with the goal of becoming happier, or developing the motivation to keep on a quest towards happiness, with its beneficial spin-offs for relationships and society more widely? We found it is possible to move in the direction of fostering personal change rather than, or as well as, knowledge acquisition. However, course structures and student expectations put limits on the extent of this movement. This reflects a teaching tension in a number of fields between an emphasis on learning content and one of personal change.

When giving a student a mark for an assignment in a happiness subject, we are assessing their performance according to traditional academic criteria, not for their progress in a journey of personal transformation. A mark is about learning content and skills, not about happiness per se, and perhaps this is only appropriate: marking a person's happiness journey might be self-contradictory or counterproductive. There is a tension in assessing performance according to academic criteria when our goal is partly non-academic. There is no obvious resolution to this dilemma.

Some teachers are enthusiastic; others are burnt out. Employment requires no particular emotional state, though energy and commitment usually make for better teaching. The happiness class brought to the fore the emotional state of the teacher: surely being a happy teacher should be one goal! Thankfully, we found this potential dilemma the easiest to resolve: as long as the goals of students and teachers are compatible, including some commitment to the process of becoming happier, then fostering the teacher's happiness is a reasonable component of designing a happiness class.

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